

## Environment Effect on Fatigue of AerMet 100 Steel

E. U. Lee\*, K. Sadananda\*\*, and R. E. Ricker\*\*\*

This study was conducted to identify the environment effect on the near-threshold fatigue crack growth in AerMet 100 steel at various load ratios ( $R = 0.05 - 0.9$ ) and frequencies ( $0.1 - 10$  Hz). The test environments were vacuum, gaseous dry nitrogen, distilled water, and four NaCl solutions of different concentrations. Three of them had an identical electrical conductivity. The test results were analyzed in terms of threshold stress intensity range  $\Delta K_{th}$  and maximum stress intensity at threshold  $K_{max}$ .

Increasing R-ratio enhanced the near-threshold fatigue crack growth rate and reduced the  $\Delta K_{th}$  in respective environments.

In vacuum and NaCl solutions,  $\Delta K_{th}$  decreased linearly with increasing R-ratio. In dry gaseous nitrogen,  $\Delta K_{th}$  decreased initially with increasing R-ratio, and then leveled off at high R-ratios. For  $R < 0.5$ ,  $\Delta K_{th}$  is highest in NaCl solutions, intermediate in vacuum, and lowest in dry gaseous nitrogen. On the other hand, for  $R > 0.7$ , it is highest in vacuum, intermediate in dry gaseous nitrogen, and lowest in NaCl solutions.

$K_{max}$  changed little at lower R-ratios but it increased rapidly at high R-ratios in respective environments. For  $R < 0.5$ ,  $K_{max}$  is highest in NaCl solutions, intermediate in vacuum, and lowest in dry gaseous nitrogen. On the other hand, for  $R > 0.7$ , it is highest in vacuum, intermediate in dry gaseous nitrogen, and lowest in NaCl solutions.

According to the fundamental threshold curves of  $\Delta K_{th}$  vs  $K_{max}$ , the resistance to fatigue crack growth is highest in vacuum, intermediate in dry gaseous nitrogen, and lowest in NaCl solutions for  $K_{max} > 9 \text{ MPa}\sqrt{\text{m}}$ . For 3.5% NaCl solution, the extrapolation of the fundamental threshold curve intersects the  $K_{max}$ -axis for  $\Delta K_{th} = 0$  at a value close to the  $K_{ISCC}$  for AerMet 100 steel,  $25.6 \text{ MPa}\sqrt{\text{m}}$ .

The fractography, crack path and crack-tip geometry were also examined for the tests in different environments.

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
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1. REPORT DATE		2. REPORT TYPE Abstract		3. DATES COVERED	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE  Environment Effect on Fatigue of AerMet 100 Steel		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER			
		5b. GRANT NUMBER			
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER			
6. AUTHOR(S)  E. U. Lee, K. Sadananda, and R. E. Ricker		5d. PROJECT NUMBER			
		5e. TASK NUMBER			
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division 22347 Cedar Point Road, Unit #6 Patuxent River, Maryland 20670-1161		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER			
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  Naval Air Systems Command 47123 Buse Road Unit IPT Patuxent River, Maryland 20670-1547		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)			
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)			
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT  Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT  This study was conducted to identify the environment effect on the near-threshold fatigue crack growth in AerMet 100 steel at various load ratios ( $R = 0.05 - 0.9$ ) and frequencies ( $0.1 - 10$ Hz). The test environments were vacuum, gaseous dry nitrogen, distilled water, and four NaCl solutions of different concentrations. Three of them had an identical electrical conductivity. The test results were analyzed in terms of threshold stress intensity range $\Delta K_{th}$ and maximum stress intensity at threshold $K_{max}$ .					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			E. U. Lee
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified			Unclassified

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)  
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18

DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 4